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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE

IN RE APPLICATION OF :  
FRANCOIS VARDON : ATTN: APPLICATION DIVISION  
SERIAL NO: NEW U.S. PCT APPLN :  
(BASED ON PCT/FR02/00482)  
FILED: HEREWITH :  
FOR: SHELF FOR SUPPORTING  
ARTICLES, PARTICULARLY IN  
REFRIGERATED INSTALLATIONS

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20231

SIR:

Prior to a first examination on the merits, please amend the above-identified application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 1-17 without prejudice.

Please add new Claims 18-37 as follows:

18. (New) A shelf, comprising at least one panel and at least one attached plastic structure, wherein said shelf is obtained by shrinking said at least one attached plastic structure after the at least one panel and the at least one attached plastic structure have been assembled.

19. (New) A shelf as claimed in claim 18, wherein the at least one panel and the at least one attached plastic structure mate with an edge of the panel.

20. (New) A shelf as claimed in claim 18, wherein the at least one panel and the at least one attached plastic structure exert lateral pressure on an edge of the panel.

21. (New) A shelf as claimed in claim 18, wherein the at least one attached plastic structure is formed with at least first and second plastics, the first plastic being more flexible than the second plastic and configured to be in contact with the at least one panel and at least partly covering the second plastic that is more rigid than the first plastic.

22. (New) The shelf as claimed in claim 18, wherein the at least one panel is secured to the at least one attached plastic structure by at least one of shrinking of the structure, clipping, and gluing.

23. (New) The shelf as claimed in claim 18, further comprising at least one of an elastic adhesive and at least one flexible insulating gasket.

24. (New) A shelf as claimed in claim 18, further comprising at least one assembly element having at least a first part clipped under the at least one panel against a vertical wall of the at least one attached plastic structure, a second part clipped under the at least one attached plastic structure, and a third part bent to border another part of the shelf or to form a runner configured to collaborate for cantilever mounting in a unit.

25. (New) A shelf as claimed in claim 18, and which slides with respect to a support formed as a single piece.

26. (New) A shelf as claimed in claim 18, wherein the at least one panel and the at least one attached plastic structure are obtained by air molding.

27. (New) A method of manufacturing a shelf including at least one panel and at least one plastic structure, comprising forming the at least one plastic structure separately from the at least one panel by hot molding, assembling the at least one panel with the at least one plastic structure after molding before the at least one plastic has fully shrunk.

28. (New) The method as claimed in claim 27, wherein the at least one panel is assembled with the at least one plastic structure after a mold has been opened, before shrinkage has reached 40% of total shrinkage.

29. (New) The method as claimed in claim 27, wherein the at least one panel is assembled on an underside or top face of the at least one plastic structure.

30. (New) The method as claimed in claim 29, wherein the at least one panel is held in place by clipping.

31. (New) The method as claimed in claim 27, wherein, prior to assembly, at least one of an elastic adhesive and at least one flexible insulating gasket is deposited on at least part of the at least one plastic structure that is to be in contact with the at least one panel.

32. (New) The method as claimed in claim 31, wherein the at least one elastic adhesive and at least one flexible insulating gasket deposited has a conical shape.

33. (New) The method as claimed in claim 32, wherein a surface of the at least one panel is pre-treated, prior to application of the at least one adhesive, by one of sandblasting, grooving, goffering, forming roughnesses, and plasma treatment, to increase an area for contact between the at least one plastic structure and the at least one of the elastic adhesive and the flexible insulating gasket.

34. (New) The method as claimed in claim 27, wherein the at least one plastic structure is formed by two-injection molding.

35. (New) The method as claimed in claim 27, whereby the at least one plastic structure is formed by air molding.

36. (New) An element for assembling a shelf in a unit, the element configured to be fixed by clipping to the shelf, and having first, second, and third parts, the first and second parts configured to be fixed following two different directions and the third part configured to border the shelf in a third direction or to form a runner.

37. (New) A refrigerator comprising at least one shelf as claimed in claim 18.

IN THE ABSTRACT

Please cancel the original Abstract on page 24 in its entirety and insert therefor:

ABSTRACT

A shelf, particularly for a refrigerator or the like, including at least one panel and at least one attached plastic structure. The shelf is obtained by shrinking the structure after assembling the panel and the structure. The attached plastic structure can mate and/or exert lateral pressure on the edge of the panel.

REMARKS

Favorable consideration of this application, as presently amended, is respectfully requested.

The present preliminary amendment is submitted to place the above-identified application in more proper format under United States practice.

By the present preliminary amendment original claims 1-17 are canceled and new claims 18-37 are presented for examination. New claims 18-37 are deemed to be self-evident from the original disclosure, including original claims 1-17, and thus are not deemed to raise any issues of new matter.

Further, new claims 18-37 are not deemed to be more narrow in scope than original claims 1-17 in any aspect.

A new Abstract believed to be in more proper format under United States practice is also submitted herein.

The present application is believed to be in condition for a full and thorough examination on the merits. An early and favorable consideration of the present application is hereby respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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219945US-6 PCT

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IN THE CLAIMS

--Claims 1-17 (Canceled).

Claims 18-37 (New).

IN THE ABSTRACT

(New).--